United Nations ST/IC/1998/66

Secretariat

8 October 1998

Information circular*

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: **Inventory of skills of Secretariat staff**

General

1. In order to amplify the computerized database of the Secretariat's human resources, the Office of Human Resources Management will be embarking on a programme to record the skills of all Secretariat staff.

Purpose and benefits

2. The inventory of staff skills will help to improve the efficiency and quality of human resources planning, an essential condition for the implementation of the Secretary-General's programme for reform. Programme managers will be able to project human resource requirements based on more complete staff data than was the case in the past. Projected losses of specific skills due to forecasted departures of staff will be assessed far in advance of the actual event. This will expand career development opportunities for the staff.

3. The staff will be the main beneficiary of the skills inventory. Information on educational background, professional experience, skills and competencies acquired, as well as on special abilities, professional attributes, work preferences and so forth, will become part of an integrated database, allowing for more proactive management, integrating organizational objectives with staff career expectations. The existence of a computerized worldwide database on skills will speed up placements and promotions and reflect the global character of the Secretariat. This will improve career and staff development.

Who is concerned?

4. The inventory of the staff skills involves all Secretariat staff, excluding only those who serve with separately administered offices, funds and programmes, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Staff with appointments under the 100 and 200 series of the Staff Rules are all included in this exercise, as well as staff having an appointment of limited duration under the 300 series of the Staff Rules.

* Expiration date of the present information circular: 30 June 1999.

5. All staff members are requested to participate in this exercise. They are reminded that the skills inventory will for the most part be based on the information they provide about themselves and that they should ensure complete accuracy of the data. The global database will be consolidated by the Office of Human Resources Management.

Modalities and procedure

6. The skills inventory questionnaire will be available through the local LAN network in each department/office, where it can be retrieved from the folder "UN Applications". A double click on the icon "Skills Inventory" will access the questionnaire form. Each staff member will enter information on the following elements:

- Present and past occupations, based on the Common Classification of Occupational Groups (CCOG), as developed by the International Civil Service Commission (information on CCOG is provided under the questionnaire).
- Work specialties complementing the occupations defined under CCOG.
- Professional preferences (functional and geographical).
- Mission and/or field experience.
- Language proficiency.
- Management training completed.
- Supervisory experience.

7. The skills inventory exercise is computer based. Staff will enter the information either from a desktop personal computer or through computers put at their disposal for the duration of the exercise. At United Nations Headquarters in New York, two sites will be made available: one in the Secretariat building in the Office of Human Resources Management (Conference Room S-2485) and one in the DC-1 building (Staff lounge, DC1-0300). Staff serving in offices away from Headquarters, remote missions, field assignments and projects are requested to enter information through a personal computer. Staff serving in the field who are unable to enter their information electronically will provide information in written form through their Executive Office, Division of Administration or Chief of Personnel.

8. When completing the questionnaire, staff will need to have some essential data readily available, such as information on previous professional experience, dates of language examinations, subjects and dates of training courses completed, dates of mission experience and the like. Information will be requested on the following items:

1. United Nations index number.
2. Date of birth.
3. Personal and professional background.
4. Present occupation and skills.
5. Preferred areas of work.
6. Work attributes.
7. Language proficiency.
8. Management training.
9. Supervisory experience.

10. Peacekeeping experience.

11. Field experience.

12. Geographical preferences.

13. Field assignment opportunities.

9. Questions related to personal background include specifications of each staff member's correct and updated personal address and telephone number. Although these questions have no direct link with the skills inventory, they constitute a piece of essential information, which the Organization must record and/or update for administrative reasons. For all Headquarters staff in New York, the information is necessary for the establishment of an updated computerized database relating to health insurance.

10. The questionnaire is user friendly. It helps the respondent through the questionnaire and guides him/her through the steps he/she needs to take. A detailed description of the procedure to follow for completing the questionnaire has been provided to all executive officers, chiefs of administration and personnel chiefs.

11. All questions related to present and past occupations will refer to the Common Classification of Occupational Groups, promulgated by the International Civil Service Commission. Depending on the question, the staff member is requested to select from the list of occupational titles one or more codes that correspond to their occupation. The CCOG list is available as a reference table in the questionnaire.

12. The questionnaire also refers to a list of "Work specialties", which include a variety of skills and competencies, some of which are supplementary to the existing occupational titles under CCOG. They can be selected in order to complement the professional profile. Language, nationality and mission reference tables are also included in the questionnaire.

13. The electronic questionnaire can be saved to draft and completed over time. The total approximate expected time for completion of the questionnaire is 30 to 45 minutes. Once saved, data will automatically be loaded into the database.

Protection of personal data

14. The Office of Human Resources Management has taken all the security measures necessary to guarantee that individualized data entry is non-accessible by unauthorized persons. The database, before and after its consolidation, will be accessible to a limited number of users with the appropriate security clearance. The consolidated database will be made accessible to all departments and offices under specific conditions, rules and procedures.

Time-span of the exercise

15. The skills inventory is an exercise that will last several months. The present circular concerns itself with the initial data collection, which will start on Monday, 12 October 1998, and be completed by Friday, 6 November 1998.

Phased implementation of the skills inventory

16. The skills inventory is a process that will continue over time in order to improve the final product. The information requested will constitute a central module of the skills inventory. An update of the information entered in October is programmed for 1999. The final objective is to have an integrated database including education, work experience, language proficiency, skills, competencies, performance evaluations, professional preferences and so on for each staff member.

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Thank you in advance for your cooperation in helping to launch this important initiative, which is of benefit both to the Organization and to the staff.